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proof of the beauty attainable by a little study. Somebody had said that he had understated the amount of time required to obtain perfection in "writing," as it was called. They had mistaken him. He had been astonished at the skill with which a mere workman would strike a true curve accurately and well,—but he wanted to see more than this mere nimbleness of fingers.

We shall republish, from time to time, a series of letters by William Page, which appeared in the *Broadway Journal* some years since, and which, from the standing of the author, and the originality of the views they contain, will, we believe, prove interesting to the public, though in many respects we believe Page himself would now differ from them.—EDS. CRAYON.

### THE ART OF THE USE OF COLOR IN IMITATION IN PAINTING.

NO. I.

BY WILLIAM PAGE.

IMITATION I understand to be the means whereby in Art the effects of Nature are imitated, or reproduced, and the more nearly the means used correspond with, or are analogous to, those used by nature in the production of her effects, the nearer will be the impression made on the eye by such artistic result to that made by the real object in nature itself.

Sir Joshua Reynolds declares that Gerard Douw, with his high finishing, was a closer imitator of nature than Raphael. This is false, or, to say the least, calculated to mislead the understanding. In the imitation of the minutiae of the merely external portions of inanimate objects, he no doubt was, for this is what he saw most clearly before him. But to say that Raphael did not also find in nature what he wished to represent, viz.: beauty of form and exalted harmonious expressions, would be to my mind a palpable absurdity. These he saw in nature, and transferred to his works; and though the judgment of the world has left but little doubt which is to be preferred, it is still less doubtful that they equally proceeded on the principle of the "immediate imitation of nature," each expressing to the best of his abilities that of which he had the clearest perception, as did Titian and Correggio in color and chiaro-scuro, they having a keener relish for these qualities, than for expression or form.

Then, who will pretend to say, that Raphael would not have been exalted to a higher pitch of excellence, by the addition of the minute exactness of Gerard Douw, the color of Titian, or the clear-obscure of Correggio, if these could have been superadded to his own, if you will, higher possessions, without displacing any of his already attained excellences. And that such a thing might be, needs only eyes to see, that in Nature herself all this, and more, is accomplished; there, the minuteness that puts Douw's best efforts to shame, and causes Titian's color to pale at the comparison, and the light and dark of Correggio to look heavy and dull, lie side by side with a diviner exaltation of expression than ever Raphael could dream, and add to its force and truth. In sculpture we have an illustration. The busts of our countryman, Hiram Powers, which have all the breadth of the finest antique heads, and a minuteness of finish in all the details, unknown to that gifted people, the Greeks, and still more so to modern nations, without disturbing either breadth of form or expression, shall yet make the world wonder that such things should have been done in our midst, and never a cry of a miracle, a miracle!

It may here be well to a clearer understanding of the subject, to observe, that in sculpture the means used are fully adequate to the end to be produced—being, with a perfectly pliant substance, wet clay, to imitate or reproduce the form of any natural object, giving only one

body for a like form of body in another substance: which will at once show the wide difference between these two imitative Arts, when we consider that in painting the flat substance must appear rotund, or otherwise the form of the thing to be imitated, where the form is not, but only the appearance; to say nothing of the light, dark, and color, necessary to give those other innumerable qualities demanded in a picture. And this brings us to the means used in the latter Art, to convey impressions as of natural objects, more particularly color. Now, there are but three primitive colors used by the Creator to adorn and beautify this all-beautiful world of his creation, viz., red, yellow and blue. Yet, these three,—to which all tints, hues, and variations are to be traced, together with light and dark, so imperfectly represented in painting by white and black, are all the feeble means we have, with our own short sight, to compete with that infinite variety of Nature which has been the love and admiration of all mankind from the beginning. It will then seem evident, that economy with these slender means must be of the last importance; and that he who uses these most ingeniously, and with the least outlay of them, so that he produces the desired effect, and has most power in reserve, will be the truest artist.

If white and black are the extreme limits of our scope with which we must represent, if at all, that infinite stretch in nature between her intensest ray of light, and that outer darkness where no light is—for often as we have used our utmost skill to make the surface of our canvas, or the plane on which we produce our pictures, as dark as pigments will make it, it will cast a shadow in noon-day darker than itself; and so when our brilliant white has been exhausted in imitating light, a little diamond would blaze upon its surface. This being so, may well teach us how limited is our power to cope with the Infinite, and, that humility and the following humbly, afar off, in Art, as in religion, the Almighty leading, makes us most like what we would most wish to be. Now, to bring these indefinite extremes of Nature within our own range of mental vision, let us suppose them divided into five degrees, equally removed from each other, the first being light, and the last perfect darkness; but, though this simple division will answer our purpose for illustration in writing, the artist must make an almost infinite subdivision in his practice. Then suppose, in like manner, the painter's representatives of light and darkness so divided into a like number of degrees, that the medium or third degree in the scale is equally removed from each extreme in either case, will not this give us the nearest approach that we can get in Art, to the medium or third degree in Nature in the scale which we have indicated above? If so, let us fix this in our minds as the centre whence all analysis begins. We shall hereafter have occasion to refer to this more particularly.

The painting of human flesh has always been considered the best test of the powers of a colorist; and the human face may well be considered as the highest test, as the well-known focus (so to speak) of expression. Goethe has well said in his "Theory of Colors," that here nature seems to have exhausted all her resources, having so used all the primitive colors, and so interwoven and combined them, that we scarce know which predominate (I quote from memory)—and he might have added, that all other known qualities, too, present themselves to our eyes here, or rather evade our search and strive to hide themselves from our observation, as any painter who has tried to represent them, well knows. Although one of these above-named primitive colors—blue, has been found to exist in nature, in the case of the blue sky, as the product of light over dark (that is, the darkness of space beyond, seen by us through the light of the atmosphere of earth, producing, as darkness

seen through light always does, the blueness); and has, on this account, been rejected by some as a primitive color; yet, as it cannot be resolved back again to the other two primitives, or be produced by any known combination of these, we must occupy it. I should wish to call this color of the sky an accidental color, in contradistinction to the local color of the violet, or any other blue thing where the color cannot be separated from the substance, but is always a part of it. Now it will be clearly seen, that if we had the pigments capable of representing perfect light and perfect dark, we should very readily produce a complete resemblance to this color of the sky, by making a ground of perfect darkness, and when this was dry, so as not to mix these extremes, or the pigments representing them, passing over it a layer of perfect light, so as to allow that dark to appear through, as in the reality.

(To be Continued.)

**LONDON ARCHITECTURE.**—The outside of the common brick houses of London is very plain, and has nothing agreeable in the architecture, unless it be the neat and well-defined joints of the brick-work. On the other hand, many of the great palace-like buildings are furnished with architectural decorations of all kinds—with pillars, pilasters, &c. There are, however, two reasons why most of them have rather a disagreeable effect. In the first place, they are destitute of continuous, simple main lines, which are indispensable in grand architectural effects, and to which even the richest decoration must be strictly subordinate. Secondly, the decorative fixtures are introduced in a manner entirely arbitrary, without any regard to their original meaning, or to the destination of the edifice.

This absurdity is carried to the greatest excess in the use of columns; these, originally supporting members, which, placed in rows in the buildings of the ancients, produce the combined effect of a pierced wall, bearing one side of a space beyond, are here ranged in numberless instances, as wholly unprofitable servants, directly before a wall. This censure applies in an especial manner to most of the works of the lately deceased architect, Nash. In truth, he has a peculiar knack of depriving masses of considerable dimension, of all effect, by breaking them into a number of little projecting and receding parts; while, in the use of the most diverse forms and ornaments, he is so arbitrary, that many of his buildings—for instance, the new palace of Buckingham House—looks as if some wicked magician had suddenly transformed some capricious stage scenery into solid reality.—*Dr. Waagen.*

**COLUMN MONUMENTS.**—What shall we say to the fact, that the English, who first made the rest of Europe acquainted with the immortal models of the noblest and chastest taste in architecture and sculpture of ancient Greece, when it was resolved, a few years ago, to erect a monument to the Duke of York, produced nothing but a bad imitation of Trajan's Pillar!

This kind of monument first came into use among the Romans, a people who, in respect to the gift of invention in the Arts, and in matters of taste, always appear, in comparison with the Greeks, as semi-barbarian. The very idea of isolating the column proves that the original destination, as the supporting member of a building, was wholly lost sight of. Besides this, the statue placed on it, though as colossal as the size of the base will allow, necessarily appears little and puppet-like, compared with the column; while the features and expression of the countenance, which are the most important indications of intellectual character in the person commemorated, are wholly lost to the spectator.—*Dr. Waagen.*